



Staff Report

RESOLUTION APPROVING A COST OF LIVING SALARY ADJUSTMENT FOR CITY CLERK

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving a cost of living salary adjustment for the City Clerk.

Background

An amendment to the *Unrepresented (Department Head) Compensation and Benefit Plan* was approved by Council on May 26, 2009. This amendment adjusted the department head salary control points and authorized the City Manager to adjust department head salaries by a maximum of 4% per fiscal year. The City Clerk is a member of the City's Senior Management Team and designated as a department head. However, as an elected official, the compensation and benefits for the City Clerk are handled separately from the unrepresented/department head group. To remain consistent in timing, it is appropriate to review the City Clerk's salary at this time.

Historically, the City Clerk position has received salary and benefit changes under various methods, which in recent years include:

- In June 1996, the City Council approved Resolution No. 7864 which set the City Clerk's salary increases equal to the Mid-Management/Confidential Employees Association.
- In September 1999, the City Council approved Resolution No. 8606 which set the City Clerk's salary increases equal to those received by the unrepresented management employees/department heads.
- In November 2002, the City Council approved Resolution No. 9328 establishing salary range steps for the City Clerk and authorizing automatic annual salary step increases until the top step of the salary range was reached.
- In September 2005, in lieu of granting an automatic salary step increase, the Council changed the method of determining the City Clerk's increase by setting it to an amount equivalent to CPI (Consumer Price Index). This Resolution No. 9705 superceded and replaced all previous resolutions noted above (Resolutions 7864, 8606, and 9328).

- In February 2007, the Council approved Resolution No. 9852 which granted the City Clerk an eight percent (8%) salary increase effective July 1, 2006. The 8% salary increase consisted of 3.2% based on CPI and 4.8% toward the goal of attaining median.

To advance the best interests of the City, department heads deferred any salary adjustments until the City could complete negotiations with two labor groups. Consequently, the City Clerk along with the other department heads did not receive a salary increase in 2008.

Discussion

To assist Council in considering a salary increase for the City Clerk, staff conducted a market salary survey using the unrepresented management survey group. The results are shown below.

Agency	Status	Class	Total Comp*
Los Altos	Appointed	City Clerk	11,815
Menlo Park	Appointed	City Clerk	11,909
San Carlos	Biforcated	Assistant City Clerk	11,033
Foster City	Appointed	City Clerk	10,681
Millbrae	Appointed	City Clerk	10,690
Burlingame	Elected	City Clerk	10,220
Belmont	Elected	City Clerk	9,523

Belmont Max Salary

9,523.00

Survey Median (less Belmont)

10,862.00

Belmont Differential

-14.06%

*Total Compensation = Salary and Benefits (i.e. retirement, health, deferred compensation, etc.)

Belmont City Clerk's current total compensation is \$9,523 per month (\$7,773 top step salary per month) as you can see above; Belmont is ranked last in the group at -14.06% below total compensation median. However, in consideration of the current economic situation the City Clerk has asked that any equity adjustments be deferred to a later date. In lieu of the aforementioned equity adjustment, the City Clerk is proposing a nominal cost of living increase of 1.78% based on the April 2009 SF-Oak-SJ CPI.

If the 1.78% cost of living salary increase is approved by Council the City Clerk's salary would increase to \$7,911 per month, and place the City Clerk at -12.43% below the total compensation median.

In determining the City Clerk's salary, it is recommended that the Council consider the following:

- 1) In light of the current economic environment the City Clerk has declined an equity adjustment at this time. The City Clerk has alternatively proposed a negligible cost of living increase of 1.78% based on CPI.

- 2) The City Clerk's salary is significantly under market and will require further review at a later date.
- 3) Continue to annually review the salary at the same time as department heads in May/June for the following fiscal year with the goal of attaining median over a phased in period.
- 4) The City Clerk has typically received the same benefits as those provided to the department head group. In keeping with this practice, continue to provide the same level of benefits. There were no changes in department head benefits this year. It is recommended they remain the same for the City Clerk this year.

General Plan/vision Statement

There will be no impact to the General Plan/Vision Statement.

Fiscal Impact

It is anticipated there will be a minimal impact to budget. The salary change described above is estimated to cost \$1,700 in fiscal year 2009-2010.

Public Contact

Posting of City Council Agenda.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolution approving a cost of living salary increase for the City Clerk effective July 1, 2009.

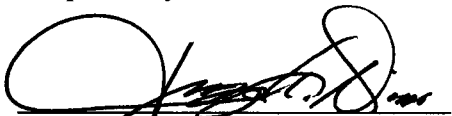
Alternatives

1. Provide staff with alternative direction.
2. Take no action.

Attachments

- A. Resolution Approving Cost of Living Salary Adjustment for the City Clerk
- B. City Clerk Memo to Council dated June 5, 2009

Respectfully submitted,



Corazon M. Dino
Human Resources Director



Jack R. Crist
City Manager

Staff Contact:

Cora Dino, Human Resources Director
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RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELMONT
APPROVING A COST OF LIVING SALARY ADJUSTMENT FOR CITY CLERK**

WHEREAS, the City Clerk is an elected official whose salary is set by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the Unrepresented Management Group Compensation and Benefit Plan was recently amended to reflect applicable salary control point adjustments effective July 1, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the City Clerk position is a department head position and will continue to receive a review of salary and benefits at the same time as the unrepresented management group in keeping with past practice; and

WHEREAS, the City Clerk shall receive a one point seven eight percent (1.78%) adjustment to salary effective July 1, 2009 (based on April 2009 CPI of 1.78%), with all benefits to remain the same as the department head group, which are unchanged for fiscal year 2009-2010; and

WHEREAS, this resolution acts to supercede all resolutions in place prior to the date of its adoption.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Belmont does hereby approve a salary adjustment of one point seven eight percent (1.78%) for the City Clerk effective July 1, 2009, and all benefits to remain the same as the department head group, which are unchanged for fiscal year 2009-2010.

* * * * *

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Belmont at a regular meeting thereof held on June 23, 2009, by the following vote:

AYES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

NOES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSTAIN, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSENT, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

CLERK of the City of Belmont

APPROVED:

MAYOR of the City of Belmont



CITY OF BELMONT

City Clerk's Office

One Twin Pines Lane, Suite 375
Belmont, CA 94002
(650) 595-7413

To: Belmont City Council

From: Terri Cook, City Clerk

Re: Salary

Date: June 5, 2009

I'm taking this opportunity to address my salary. As you know, as an elected city clerk, my salary is set by the City Council. I am part of the Senior Management Team, but I am not entitled to any performance-based evaluation or bonus system. I do receive the same medical, dental, and deferred compensation package as other department heads, although I have not requested a car allowance as provided for in that package (discretionary by the city manager).

The staff report to which this memo is attached, as submitted by Human Resources, provides you with recent history of my salary and current comparisons with other cities. The purpose of this memo is to provide you with my thoughts and my rationale regarding what is being proposed for your consideration.

My salary is the last Belmont salary you are addressing this year. I recognize that improvements were made in salary and benefits of all the bargaining groups, including my department head peers, and those agreements included addressing equity. As noted in the staff report, my salary remains well below median, and when compared with straight salary (not including benefits), I am the second-lowest paid city clerk in San Mateo County (not counting the elected City Clerk in Daly City). I am aware that this Council's general goal is to try to maintain Belmont salaries at or near median.

In recent months the City Council has received considerable correspondence and heard testimony from many residents during hearings for proposed fee increases for sewer and solid waste. Many have expressed concerns about the current economic situation and their own personal sacrifices and financial circumstances, and the effect these new and increased fees will have on them. A local newspaper has published detailed salary information of many cities in the area, and has provided editorial comments regarding same. The San Mateo County Grand Jury has also recently addressed this topic.

I met with HR Director Cora Dino and City Manager Jack Crist to discuss my salary, and they were prepared to present you with a resolution which would continue the effort to narrow the gap in the below-median situation by recommending a 4% increase effective June 2009, and a 4%

increase starting July 2009. However, I have requested that the resolution address a cost of living adjustment (COLA) only, starting July 1, 2009, and put any continuing effort to narrow this below-median gap on hold. I cannot in good conscience request anything more than that.

I support paying people a salary commensurate with the position. It is important that the citizens of Belmont elect (hire) a city clerk who has the ability to do the job and to serve them well. For this they should pay an appropriate salary. While I am comfortable with my salary, there will come a time that I will no longer be the City Clerk, and another qualified candidate will need to be elected. Therefore I don't want to lose sight of the fact that we should be keeping abreast of the market median situation. When the time comes for the citizens to recruit the next city clerk, they will want to pay him or her an appropriate salary in order to recruit the best candidate.

In 1997, when I was first elected to City Council, the City had just undergone an employee classification and compensation study. The then-City Clerk's salary was found to be considerably below median. In 2005, this same situation occurred (25 percent below), at which time efforts were undertaken to rectify this situation. This has resulted in narrowing of the gap to 16 percent below median, which is where it is currently. I have not had a salary raise in two years. I realize that by declining anything more than a very small COLA, this gap will likely increase. This is a situation that should be monitored in succeeding years.

I feel very privileged and fortunate to be serving my community in the capacity of Belmont City Clerk. I recognize these are tough times for everyone, and while declining anything but a COLA is a mere drop in the bucket for the City's budget, and that a larger salary increase won't make or break the bank, I want to be mindful of our economic situation.